

Current Articles & Research Resources, July 25

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In this weekly post, we feature helpful research tools and recent articles of interest to the legislative community.

- Review the [ballot language](#) in the upcoming constitutional amendment election in November. (Texas Secretary of State, accessed July 24, 2019)
- Explore how [demand response](#) works to meet energy needs of consumers. (National Conference of State Legislatures, July 2019)
- Consider how third-party [debt collections](#) affect consumers' credit. (Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, July 2019)
- Examine the circumstances under which a debtor may discharge a [student loan](#) under federal bankruptcy laws. (Congressional Research Service, July 18, 2019)

Members of the Texas legislative community may request the articles below [here](#) or by calling 512-463-1252.

- "[Measles as metaphor](#)." By Peter Beinart. *Atlantic Monthly*, August 2019, pp. 13-16.
Suggests declining vaccination rates reflect a population that lacks awareness of lessons of the past, has overconfidence in its own "amateur knowledge," and shows little trust in government and other institutions. Offers solutions to reverse the trend.
- "Suburb weighs how to slow apartment construction." By Daniel Salazar. *Austin Business Journal*, July 19, 2019, p. 8.
Reports that Leander City Council's proposal to restrict the use of certain building materials on new multifamily projects could violate [HB2439](#), 86th Legislature, relating to overly restrictive building regulations.
- "How Texas flushed out plumbers." By David Wethe. *Bloomberg Businessweek*, July 15, 2019, pp. 37-39.
Discusses Governor Greg Abbott's [emergency executive order](#) relating to continuing the Texas State Board of Plumbing Examiners. Explains how the agency's Sunset legislation, [SB621](#), failed to pass the 86th Legislature.
- "Trying to change Congress, starting with the lowest rung: Interns." By Jessica Mendoza. *Christian Science Monitor*, July 22, 2019, pp. 6-7.
Highlights the College to Congress program, a nonprofit that helps low-income students obtain internships in Congress. Explains the program seeks bipartisan participation.
- "Way ahead of you, Congress." By Jacob Fischler. *CQ Weekly*, July 15, 2019, pp. 31-33.
Looks at what state legislatures are doing to address climate change. Focuses on states led by Democrats who campaigned on climate policy in the 2018 elections.
- "The world economy: A strangely elastic expansion." *Economist*, July 13th-19th, 2019, pp. 21-23.
Comments on America's economic expansion, which at the end of July will have

matched the record for the longest unbroken period of rising GDP set in the 1990s. Considers factors that could trigger a recession.

- "The U. S. Supreme Court and schools: 2018-19." By Mark Walsh. *Education Week*, July 17, 2019, pp. 19-20.

Summarizes recent United States Supreme Court rulings relevant to K-12 education, including the census citizenship question, age discrimination, religion in a public square, and federal administrative power. Identifies several high profile education-related cases that will be heard during the Court's 2020 term.

- "State efforts to lower health care prices paid by private insurers." By Aditi P. Sen, Amber Willink, and Gerard F. Anderson. *JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association)*, July 16, 2019, pp. 201-202.

Outlines three approaches states are taking to lower health care prices paid by private insurers: targeted price regulation, promoting competition, and investing in alternative payment models.

- "Energy efficiency in cannabis cultivation: A growing concern." By John Hargrove. *Public Utilities Fortnightly*, July 2019, pp. 147, 149.

Features a brief discussion about the energy-related challenges of harvesting cannabis.

- "[Voting by phone is easy. But is it secure?](#)" By Matt Vasilogambros. *Stateline (Pew Charitable Trusts)*, July 18, 2019, pp. 1-6.

Discusses the conflict between accessibility and security in phone-based voting systems.

- "[Forgotten in the fields.](#)" By Dana Ullman. *Texas Observer*, July/August 2019, pp. 20-25.

Describes forced agricultural labor of farmworkers in Texas, who increasingly come to the state on H-2A guest worker visas, and the difficulty in prosecuting labor trafficking cases. Cites a [2016 study](#) by The University of Texas at Austin, which estimated there are 234,000 labor trafficking victims in Texas with \$600 million in annual wages stolen.

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